

DRAFT

**REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND
HOMELESS ASSISTANCE APPLICATION**

**Kirkwood Army Reserve Center
3931 Kirkwood Highway
Wilmington, Delaware**

**Submitted by the Delaware Redevelopment Authority
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Redevelopment Plan

- Property and Region Overview
- Process Overview and Timeline
- Recommendations Summary

DRAFT Recommendations**Homeless Assistance Application**

- Introduction
- Information About Homelessness
- Consolidated Plan Information
- Notices of Intent and Public Comments

Appendix List

- A. Aerial Map of Property
- B. Executive Order #85
- C. Delaware Redevelopment Authority (DRA) Membership List
- D. Public Outreach Period Newspaper Article
- E. List of DRA Activities
- F. Public Meeting Sign-In Sheets
- G. List of Homeless Representatives
- H. Summary Chart of Notices of Intent (NOI)
- I. Correspondence with the Homeless Planning Council
- J. Summary Chart of NOI Criteria and Findings
- K. Meeting Minutes
- L. Summary Chart of Public Comment Letters

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Property and Region Overview

The Major Robert Kirkwood Army Reserve Center (USARC) is located at 3931 Kirkwood Highway, Wilmington, Delaware. The property consists of approximately 9.46 acres, originally purchased in 1955 by the United States Army. The USARC is located in the unincorporated area of New Castle County (NCCo) and has a zoning classification of Suburban Transition (ST). Water service and sanitary sewer capacity are provided by the City of Wilmington. Connectiv Energy provides natural gas service and Delaware Electric Cooperative provides electric service.

Two buildings sit on the front portion of the property: a training building (44,392 square feet) and an operations maintenance shed (6,136 square feet). Commercial properties flank the front portion of the property. The rear portion of the property consists of parking areas, driveways, walkways, and greenspace, all of which are immediately adjacent to three residential subdivisions. The Kirkwood USARC sits on a busy highway, near a critical intersection for east-west and north-south travel through the State. The site is in close proximity to multiple business centers, as well as regional centers focusing on research and education. Appendix A contains an aerial map of the property.

Any future reuse of the property must be mindful of the needs of the community, how it would fit into the local area, and necessary upgrades to the property (including bringing buildings up to code and ensuring proper transportation and utilities infrastructure). Planning documents from the State of Delaware and New Castle County are critical sources of information pertaining to community needs. The following documents pertain to the region surrounding the Kirkwood USARC and were considered by the Delaware Redevelopment Authority to develop reuse recommendations: Livable Delaware, State of Delaware Consolidated Plan, Delaware Annual Action Plan, New Castle County Five-Year Strategic Plan, Delaware's Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the State of Delaware.

Process Overview and Timeline

On May 9, 2006, the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act of 2005 became law, thus solidifying the recommendation of the BRAC Commission that the Major Robert Kirkwood Army Reserve Center close by September 2011. Subsequently, Governor Minner issued Executive Order #85 to create the Delaware Redevelopment Authority (DRA), charged with responding to the needs of the Delawareans and communities impacted by the closure of the Reserve Center. The Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment recognized the DRA as the Local Redevelopment Authority to present a reuse plan for this property. Executive Order #85 is included in Appendix B. The appointed membership list is included in Appendix C. The DRA has worked in accordance with federal and state laws relating to focus, public involvement, and general process, to diligently work to gain consensus as to the highest and best future use of the property.

Between June 8, 2006 and September 8, 2006, the DRA held two public meetings including a public tour of the site, in order to inform the DRA and the public about the DRA's process and schedule for receiving comments and recommendations, as well as the closure disposal process. A copy of the newspaper article announcing the public outreach period is included in Appendix D. The DRA received seven Notices of Intent (NOI), and seven written public comments. In addition, concerns raised by the public during the meetings were noted in the meeting minutes. Following the public comment period, the DRA held six public meetings, with the purposes of hearing presentations by the NOI sponsors, allowing for further public input, and making final decisions as to the future reuse of the property.

Notices of meetings and all associated documentation were made available to the public via various means, including the Delaware News Journal, Mill Creek Community News, public service announcements, the Delaware Economic Development Office and Government Information Center websites, local community center announcement bulletin boards, the Delaware State Housing Authority email listserve, and via contact information of homeless services providers provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Further, the DRA provided contact information to each NOI sponsor eligible for a Public Benefit Conveyance, so they may contact the relevant federal sponsoring agency. All materials referenced but not included in this plan are on record with the DRA. A complete list of DRA activities is included in Appendix E. Sign in sheets are included in Appendix F.

Recommendations Summary

The recommendations contained in this Redevelopment Plan are the result of a deliberative process prescribed by the Department of Defense and Department of Housing and Urban Development, and diligently followed by the Delaware Redevelopment Authority (DRA). They reflect the Authority's desire to benefit the community and the local economy. All Notices of Intent (NOI) and public comments were considered by the DRA to ensure that its final recommendations: reflect community needs including those of the homeless community; are consistent with state and local plans; and can be carried out in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. In cases where the DRA dispensed with certain NOIs it did so on the basis that they did not meet the prescribed standard, were not consistent with state and local plans, or they adversely impacted the character of the neighborhood.

The recommendations contained herein seek to benefit the community in three ways, including providing improved regional storm water management, creating additional recreation and open space, and adding valuable commercial space, which returns some of the government's original investment back to the United States and provides ongoing, additional state and local tax revenues.

Since the acquisition of this property by the United States Army in the 1950's, the local community experienced a rapid population growth. Planning and development at that time was not as sophisticated as it is today and over time certain gaps in key services and amenities emerged. Notable among these gaps are certain deficiencies in regional storm water management and certain deficiencies in nearby recreational and open space.

The DRA believes there is an opportunity to improve the quality of life in this area by correcting these two deficiencies. Additional storm water management controls would help alleviate local flooding for those communities adjacent to this property and in proximity to Calf Run. Recreational spaces nestled within established, densely-populated neighborhoods would enhance the sense of community, especially when coupled with active civic associations, such as those representing the communities surrounding this property. Finally, returning a portion of the property to the tax rolls in a way that is consistent with modern state and local economic development and land use planning would strengthen the area's economy, as well as provide growth opportunities consistent with comprehensive planning measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Delaware Redevelopment Authority recommends the following reuse plan to the Department of Defense and the Department of Housing and Urban Development:

- (1) The Delaware Redevelopment Authority recommends the conveyance of six (6) rear acres of the Kirkwood Army Reserve Center to New Castle County, Delaware, for the purpose of construction and operation of a regional stormwater management facility. Given the shape of the rear six (6) acres and noting the adjacent property lines, the Delaware Redevelopment Authority recommends that any acreage contained within the denoted six (6) acres, but not employed directly in the management of stormwater, be used to facilitate safety and open space, such as community recreation, around the stormwater management area.
- (2) The Delaware Redevelopment Authority recommends a public sale for the remaining front 3.46 acres, provided that the purpose of the future tenant is consistent with Governor Minner's Livable Delaware economic development agenda, community needs and the character of the existing neighborhoods adjacent to the property. Rezoning may be necessary.

Further, as the DRA proceeded with drafting a redevelopment plan that takes account past land uses and current property conditions, including environmental conditions, the DRA notes the following remaining environmental concerns and recommendations for mitigation.

- The DRA remains concerned about the absence or presence of substances of concern that may pose threats to public health, safety, and welfare; may trigger future regulatory action; may require expenditures; or may impede or guide redevelopments of the property.
- Based on the Department of Defense's Environmental Condition of Property report for the Major Robert Kirkwood United States Army Reserve Center, the DRA requests that DoD conduct additional environmental testing of the site, in accordance with DoD standards and guidance, as well as the prevailing standards of care.
- Testing shall include on-site soil, groundwater, testing for lead based paint and asbestos, and geophysical testing for underground structures and/or buried objects.

HOMELESS ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

Introduction

The Delaware Redevelopment Authority (DRA) considered the concerns and needs of the community (including homeless and economic development) in order to recommend the best use of the property. As such, the DRA based its recommendations on facts derived from a comprehensive review of past use, stakeholder input, community needs, the property's potential, and analysis. Outreach was conducted with community-based organizations, businesses, nonprofit organizations and service providers. A list of representatives of the homeless, as provided by the HUD Philadelphia Field Office, is included in Appendix G.

Priority goals of the DRA for the redevelopment of this property include: retaining the character of the existing adjacent neighborhoods, providing for a critical community need, enhancing regional economic development and determining availability of assistance to the homeless. Further, the DRA took into account how various proposals would impact schools, social services, transportation, and infrastructure. The recommendation provides for two community needs – regional stormwater management and community recreation – and benefits local economic development, all of which are needs supported by local plans.

Homeless needs, as expressed through state and local plans (State of Delaware Consolidated Plan, Delaware Annual Action Plan, New Castle County Five-Year Strategic Plan, and Delaware's Plan to End Chronic Homelessness) focused on the need to fund vouchers, operating costs, short-term financial assistance, and access to affordable housing where services already exist. During the public meetings and outreach period, homeless service providers expressed that this site would not be beneficial as a homeless shelter. This statement was echoed by the local community. Further, the Department of Defense stated their opposition to the DRA providing a public benefit conveyance for the purpose of selling the property for a profit. Therefore, the DRA recommends that state and local governments determine availability of funding for these purposes.

Information About Homelessness

The Kirkwood Army Reserve Center is located in the unincorporated area of New Castle County (NCCo). Further, a wide range of functions to implement the State's housing strategy are centralized under the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA). Therefore, information on homelessness presented in this section represents statewide needs as well as the needs of NCCo. The following information on Homeless and Special Needs Populations in Delaware and the system of care was obtained from the following documents: New Castle County Five-Year Strategic Plan (2005-2010), Delaware's Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, and HUD's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) based on the 2000 Census.

Due to Delaware's small size and single metropolitan area, homeless needs assessments and planning are discussed on a countywide and statewide basis. New Castle County contains approximately 64% of Delaware's population and approximately 70% of Delaware's homeless persons, which equates to about 1,338 homeless persons. Additionally, there are 30,061

households in New Castle County where one or more persons have a mobility or self-care limitation. The current system maintains 1,356 beds for homeless individuals and families. In addition there are approximately 120 motel voucher certificates being used across the state on any given night. With the exception of 98 units owned by Newark Housing Authority within Newark city limits, there is no publicly owned housing in New Castle County outside City of Wilmington.

Consolidated Plan Information

New Castle County and the State of Delaware receive funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA). As such, the Delaware State Housing Authority and New Castle County submit Consolidated Plans and Action Plans to HUD. According to these documents, unmet needs (including the Priority Homeless Needs Assessment) and goals to address them are as follows:

Provide Services

- Non-housing needs in New Castle County are based around improving supportive services for fragile populations, including persons with disabilities, the frail elderly, homeless persons, victims of domestic violence, and at-risk youth.
- The highest priority needs to assist the homeless in NCCo include: Operating Costs for Emergency and Transitional shelters and Homeless Prevention; Rent, Mortgage, Security and Utility Deposits; and Delaware's statewide homeless continuum of care structure.
- Improve discharge and transition planning during transition from the children's system of care and following discharge from hospitalization, institutionalization, or incarceration
- Implement Delaware's Plan to End Chronic Homelessness by 2014: memoranda of understanding; Homeless Management Information System; identifying best practices, offering short term financial assistance, and expanding street outreach.
- Research has shown that it is more cost effective to provide most treatment in community settings. For example, Delaware's Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) provides highly individualized services directly to persons in their own homes and communities.

Identify Housing

- Remove barriers to accessing existing affordable housing. Identify, enhance, and sufficiently increase affordable, livable, and appropriate permanent supportive housing stock. Identify new housing for persons who are chronically homeless or at risk of chronic homelessness.
- Keep individuals housed by instituting the "wraparound" approach to delivering required services in a coordinated, complete, and easy access system.
- These persons need access to safe, affordable housing where services that are already funded can be delivered for maximum effectiveness.

Notices of Intent and Public Comments

The following Notices of Intent (NOI) were received by the DRA. A full chart, summarizing each NOI is included in Appendix H. As no homeless reuse was provided for in the reuse plan for the Kirkwood Army Reserve Center, no Legally Binding Agreement is part of this plan.

- A negotiated sale, with the proceeds provided for homeless vouchers. The DoD and HUD advised the LRA that this NOI is unlikely to be supported at the federal level. Subsequently, the provider requested and the DRA granted the opportunity to resubmit an NOI. No new proposal was received by the DRA. Included in Appendix I are the NOI, a letter from the HPC, and a letter from the DRA.
- Expansion of a church school, to become an elementary school (1st-5th)
- Early childhood (preschool/wellness) center
- Purchase at Fair Market Value and utilize for two parcels: Storm Water Management and the DE Sports Training and Rehabilitation Center
- A vehicle garage for job training for Level IV and V offenders, to enable a successful transition to public life.
- A transportation facility to house, repair, and deploy school buses.
- A transitional housing program for 18-30 year olds. The program works in conjunction with DSCYF, local non-profits, and nearby apartments.

Once the public outreach period closed, the DRA turned their focus towards evaluating the submitted proposals and determining next steps. Since federal requirements for evaluating NOIs dictate the need for the DRA to utilize a common criteria form, the DRA held two days of public meetings to allow each NOI sponsor to present their concept to the DRA and allow the membership to evaluate each proposal against these criteria. A summary of the criteria and findings is included in Appendix J.

Throughout the public outreach period and during the subsequent public meetings, several concerns with the property and community needs were brought to the attention of the DRA and local officials. The following concerns were of critical importance to the DRA in the development of this Redevelopment Plan. For additional information, please refer to meeting minutes located in Appendix K and a summary chart of public comment letters included in Appendix L.

- Flooding – The community has experienced flooding, due to their proximity to Calf Run and Red Clay Creek, and expressed support for solving drainage problems by creating stormwater management basins in the rear of the Kirkwood USARC property.
- Environmental – At the August 2, 2006 public meeting, local residents voiced concerns about drums allegedly being buried in the rear of the property approximately 30 years ago.
- Community Benefit – Community residents expressed interest in utilizing the property to benefit the community by providing services that they feel the community currently lacks, including: a community center, a library, educational use, information center (including homeless services) and recreation.

- Public comment letters submitted during the public outreach period provided wide support for the following uses: stormwater management, school, library, community center for all ages, recreation, or other uses of benefit to the community.
- Public comment letters submitted during the public outreach period provided wide opposition to the following uses: homeless shelter, subsidized housing, and corrections or law enforcement.